

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9476

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 03305

DEPT FOR EUR/EX - PLEASE PASS TO AMBASSADOR ARMSTRONG

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OTRA APMSTRONG, A.L.,

SUBJECT: PRESS QUESTIONS

REFERENCE: LONDON 3079

AS REQUESTED, THE FOLLOWING ARE SUGGESTED RESPONSES TO
THE PRESS QUESTIONS POSED IN REFTEL:

1. Q. IN THIS ERA OF KISSINGERIAN-STYLE FOREIGN POLICY,
WHAT ROLE DO YOU SEE FOR YOURSELF AS AMBASSADOR TO GREAT
BRITAIN?

A. THERE IS NO QUESTION ABOUT THE CENTRAL ROLE OF THE
PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE IN THE MAKING OF
U.S. FOREIGN POLICY. NEVERTHELESS, EVEN IN THIS ERA OF
RAPID COMMUNICATIONS AND QUICK TRAVEL, AN AMBASSADOR
PERFORMS VITAL FUNCTIONS. THESE ARE: (1) TO REPORT TO
WASHINGTON ON INTERNAL AND FOREIGN POLICY DEVELOPMENTS
IN THE COUNTRY OF ASSIGNMENT, (2) TO INTERPRET U.S.
POLICY AND DEVELOPMENTS TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE
OF THE COUNTRY TO WHICH THE AMBASSADOR IS ASSIGNED, (3)
TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO WASHINGTON ON U.S. POLICY AND
ACTIONS IN THE COUNTRY OF ASSIGNMENT, (4) TO RUN THE
EMBASSY AND U.S. CONSULATE GENERALS IN THAT COUNTRY.

2. Q. YOU WERE ONE OF THE MOST LOYAL OF PRESIDENT
NIXON'S SUPPORTERS DURING THE WATERGATE PERIOD. IN VIEW
OF HIS CHINA TRIP, DO YOU SEE A ROLE FOR HIM IN WORLD
AFFAIRS TODAY?

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A. AS YOU KNOW, PRESIDENT NIXON WENT TO CHINA AS A

PRIVATE CITIZEN AT THE INVITATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC. WHAT FURTHER ACTIVITIES PRESIDENT NIXON MIGHT UNDERTAKE AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN I AM IN NO POSITION TO PREDICT.

3. Q. YOU AND GENERAL HAIG HAD A WORKING RELATIONSHIP AT THE WHITE HOUSE. WILL YOU BE SUPPORTING HIS CALL FOR A GREATER CONTRIBUTION TO WESTERN DEFENSE BY AMERICA'S NATO ALLIES:

A. I AM AN ADMIRER OF GENERAL HAIG AND I THINK HE IS DOING AN EXCEPTIONALLY FINE JOB AT NATO. AS YOU KNOW, MY GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS THE NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE THE CORNERSTONE OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY. IN MAKING OUR OWN DEFENSE PLANS, WE GIVE IT THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE PRIORITY. WE BELIEVE THE OTHER MEMBER NATIONS OF THE ALLIANCE SHARE OUR VIEW ABOUT ITS IMPORTANCE. THEY HAVE MADE AND WE EXPECT THEY WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE AN EXCELLENT CONTRIBUTION TO NATO DEFENSES.

4. Q. SOME OF YOUR VIEWS HAVE BEEN QUOTED AS BEING NOT UNLIKE THOSE OF MRS. THATCHER. WOULD YOU AGREE WITH HER THAT THE MILITARY THREAT FROM RUSSIA IS UNDERESTIMATED IN THE WEST:

A. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS POWERFUL NUCLEAR AND CONVENTIONAL FORCES IN BEING. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THESE FORCES STEADILY ARE BEING AUGMENTED IN BOTH QUALITY AND QUANTITY. THESE ARE FACTS. OUR RESPONSE AND THAT OF OUR NATO ALLIES MUST BE TO MAINTAIN OUR OWN FORCES AND TO CONTINUE TO IMPROVE THEM ALSO FROM THE STANDPOINT OF QUALITY AND QUANTITY. AT THE SAME TIME, WE MUST CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS TO REDUCE TENSIONS AND TO DEAL WITH THE MANY SERIOUS OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS THAT STILL CONFRONT US IN OUR RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION SUCH AS SALT AND MBFR.

5. Q. AMBASSADOR RICHARDSON IS ON RECORD AS CONDEMNING AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR THE IRA TERRORISTS. WHAT SHOULD THE U.S. GOVERNMENT DO TO CURTAIL SUCH SUPPORT?

A. WE SHOULD CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS TO INFORM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ABOUT THE TRUE NATURE OF THE IRA TERRORISTS AND TO DEAL AS CRIMINALS WITH THOSE PEOPLE IN THE U.S. WHO COMMIT CRIMINAL ACTS IN SUPPORT OF THE TERRORISTS.

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6. Q. THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS HAS RECENTLY REITERATED ITS OPPOSITION TO FOX-HUNTING AND THERE IS A SUBSTANTIAL BODY OF PARLIAMENTARY OPINION THAT WOULD LIKE TO SEE IT ABOLISHED. ARE YOU A KEEN HUNTER, WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT AND DO YOU PROPOSE TO HUNT IN BRITAIN?

A. PERSONALLY, I AM NOT OPPOSED TO HUNTING--SO LONG AS IT IS HUMANE, UNDERTAKEN IN SEASON AND FULLY IN

ACCORDANCE WITH THE RULES ESTABLISHED BY LOCAL LAW AND
CUSTOM. HOWEVER. A DECISION AS TO PRECISELY WHAT I WILL

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9477

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DO IN BRITAIN WILL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL I BECOME FULLY
ACQUAINTED WITH WHAT THE LAWS AND CUSTOMS HERE ARE ON
THE SUBJECT. AS TO FOX-HUNTING. I AM NOT FAMILIAR WITH
IT IN THIS COUNTRY AND I DON'T KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT THE
CONTROVERSY TO COMMENT ON IT.

7. Q. REGARDING THE CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE
ROLE OF THE FBI, HOW WOULD YOU COUNTER THE CHARGE THAT
THE FORD ADMINISTRATION'S ABUSE OF EXECUTIVE
PRIVILEGE IS WORSE THAN IT EVER WAS UNDER NIXON?

A. OBVIOUSLY, UNDER OUR SEPARATION OF POWERS, THERE
IS AN IMPORTANT REASON FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF EXECUTIVE
PRIVILEGE. UNDER CAREFULLY CIRCUMSCRIBED RULES OF
PROCEDURE. WHERE PRESIDENT FORD HAS EXERCISED
EXECUTIVE PRIVILEGE, I BELIEVE HE HAS DONE SO IN THIS
SPIRIT.

8. Q. AS THE MOTHER OF FIVE CHILDREN, DO YOU APPROVE
OF SEX BEFORE MARRIAGE?

A. IN GENERAL, I BELIEVE THIS IS A PRIVATE AND PERSONAL
MATTER WHICH IS SUBJECT TO THE INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCE
OF THE PEOPLE CONCERNED.

9. Q. DEVOLUTION IS A BURNING TOPIC HERE AT PRESENT.
WHAT CAN BRITAIN LEARN FROM THE AMERICAN FEDERAL EXPERI-

ENCE?

A. AS YOU SAY, DEVOLUTION IS A BURNING TOPIC HERE IN GREAT BRITAIN. SINCE THAT IS THE CASE, AS AN OUTSIDER AND PARTICULARLY AS AN OUTSIDER WHO HAS JUST ARRIVED, UNCLASSIFIED

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I CERTAINLY DO NOT INTEND TO PUT FORWARD ANY PRESCRIPTIONS.

1. Q. THERE IS A FAIR CHANCE YOU WILL HOLD YOUR PRESENT OFFICE FOR A SHORTER PERIOD THAN ANY OF YOUR PREDECESSORS. WHAT IS THE JUSTIFICATION FOR SUCH A POTENTIALLY BRIEF AND COSTLY APPOINTMENT?

A. THE PRESIDENT FEELS THERE IS NO COUNTRY WHOSE RELATIONSHIP TO THE U.S. IS MORE IMPORTANT TO US THAN GREAT BRITAIN, I AM GREATLY HONORED TO BE SERVING HERE AS AMBASSADOR, I WILL SERVE AS LONG AS THE PRESIDENT WANTS ME TOO AND I HOPE IT WILL BE FOR A GOOD LONG PERIOD.

11. Q. WHAT WILL MR. ARMSTRONG BE DOING WITH HIS TIME WHILE HE IS HERE?

A. FOR NEARLY ALL OF HIS LIFE, MR. ARMSTRONG HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN RUNNING A 50,000 ACRE RANCH IN TEXAS. YOU CAN ASSUME FROM THIS THAT HE WILL NOT BE IDLE. HE WILL BE LENDING ME STRONG SUPPORT IN ALL OF MY ACTIVITIES. HE WILL BE DOING HIS BEST TO GET TO KNOW BRITAIN AND THE BRITISH PEOPLE. HE WILL BE TAKING A SPECIAL INTEREST, AS YOU MIGHT EXPECT, IN AGRICULTURE.

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